

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

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**Secretary Clinton: North Korea Can Choose the Path of Peace**

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton says the international community must unite in response to the sinking of a South Korean naval ship that killed 46 sailors, and that it is critical to avoid further escalation and the potential for greater conflict with North Korea.

At a joint press conference in Seoul with South Korean Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan, Clinton said North Korea's unprovoked sinking of the South Korean corvette Cheonan was unacceptable and that "the international community has a responsibility and a duty to respond."

Clinton said measures announced by South Korean President Lee Myung-bak in response to North Korean's actions are appropriate and prudent given the provocation, and have the full support of the United States. Lee announced that his government was severing almost all trade with North Korea, would deny North Korean merchant ships the use of South Korean sea lanes, and seeks U.N. Security Council action to punish the North. Lee said the March 26 attack on the South Korean ship was deliberate.

An explosion March 26 ripped the 1,200-ton warship in half, and it sank in about 40 meters of water near the western sea border between the South and the North. Fifty-eight sailors were rescued, but 46 were killed in the blast, the South Korean government said.

A panel of international experts from South Korea, the United States, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Australia determined the ship was sunk by a torpedo of a type manufactured and used by North Korea. Fragments of a torpedo propeller with North Korean markings were found near the site of the sinking, and investigators found traces of the explosive RDX, which is used in sea mines and torpedoes.

Clinton praised the findings of the investigation as objective, and said the evidence was overwhelming and the conclusion inescapable.

Her stop in Seoul for talks with Lee and Yu were part of a three-nation Northeast Asian mission that included meetings in Tokyo and Beijing.

"We will be working together to chart a course of action in the United Nations Security Council, and I want to acknowledge Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's strong statement on this issue," Clinton said.

In a rare break with precedent in such matters, Ban told reporters at U.N. headquarters in New York May 24 that "I'm confident that the council, in fulfilling its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, will take measures appropriate to the gravity of the situation." It is unusual for the U.N. secretary-general to comment on events and Security Council actions before they have been presented to the council.

"Pursuant to [South Korean President Lee's] call for the Security Council to address the matter, close consultations are expected to take place among key members of the council," Ban said.

Clinton, who was in Seoul for about a half day before returning to Washington, said North Korea's regime could still choose another path out of the crisis.

"Instead of isolation, poverty, conflict and condemnation, North Korea could enjoy integration, prosperity, peace and respect," she said. "Its people could finally experience a better life."

Foreign Minister Yu reaffirmed the importance of the U.S.-South Korean alliance as critical to the peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula. For more than a decade, the United States, China, Japan, Russia and South Korea have been negotiating with North Korea about its nuclear weapons program in what has been dubbed the Six-Party Talks, but the talks have stalled and the North has continued to work on its weapons program.

U.S. and South Korean leaders will meet again in a summit in late June, and a 2+2 foreign affairs and defense ministerial meeting will be held in late July.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, will meet with South Korean Defense Minister Kim Tae-young and other international defense leaders from throughout East Asia at the ninth Shangri-La Security Dialogue in Singapore June 4-6. North Korea's recent actions are expected to play a significant role in the annual defense talks.

Obama will meet with South Korea's Lee at the Group of 20 (G20) Summit in Toronto June 26-27. South Korea will host another G20 Summit in Seoul November 11-12.

**U.S. Troubled By Reports from Ethiopian Election Observers**

By Stephen Kaufman  
Staff Writer

Washington — The Obama administration praised the people of Ethiopia for participating in a peaceful May 23

parliamentary vote, but expressed concern over reports by international observers that the elections “fell short of international commitments.” It urged Ethiopian authorities to address concerns over the vote with “good faith and impartiality.”

In a May 25 statement, National Security Council spokesman Mike Hammer described limitations placed on independent observers, such as preventing U.S. Embassy officials from leaving the capital to observe the vote and harassing independent media representatives. He called such actions “deeply troubling.”

“An environment conducive to free and fair elections was not in place even before election day,” Hammer said.

According to preliminary results, incumbent Prime Minister Meles Zenawi’s ruling party is believed to have won a landslide victory. Ethiopian opposition leaders reportedly have said they will not accept the results and have called for a new vote.

Hammer urged all parties to reject violence as the electoral process concludes and said the United States is waiting to hear the final assessments of the current vote by independent observers.

He said that in recent years the Ethiopian government “has taken steps to restrict political space for the opposition through intimidation and harassment,” as well as by tightening its control over civil society and curtailing the activities of independent media in the country.

“We are concerned that these actions have restricted freedom of expression and association and are inconsistent with the Ethiopian government’s human rights obligations,” Hammer said.

“We urge the Ethiopian government to ensure that its citizens are able to enjoy their fundamental rights. We will work diligently with Ethiopia to ensure that strengthened democratic institutions and open political dialogue become a reality for the Ethiopian people,” he said.

The European Union’s Observation Mission (EU EOM) in Ethiopia released a preliminary statement May 26 that cites “several positive improvements” over previous elections, but concludes that the electoral process “fell short of certain international commitments, notably regarding the transparency of the process and the lack of a level playing field for all contesting parties.”

The election observers said the political arena leaned in favor of the ruling party “in many areas,” noting that the main opposition had been fragmented after the 2005

elections and that important opposition figures had left the political scene. In addition, “changes to the legal framework have resulted in a cumulative narrowing of the political space within the country,” the preliminary report says.

The report says that although Ethiopian media coverage of campaign events generally was neutral and proportional, the Voice of America’s Amharic Service had been jammed during the last two weeks of the campaign, which “contributed to reduce the possibility for voters to receive information from a wider range of sources.”

The EU EOM statement says the mission plans to publish its final report approximately two months after the electoral process in Ethiopia has ended.

### **U.S. Ambassadors Fund Helps Protect Lebanon’s Cultural Heritage**

*Antonine University researchers catalogue Lebanese wedding songs*

By M. Scott Bortot  
Staff Writer

Washington — Influenced by the sounds of international pop, music at Lebanese weddings is not what it used to be.

Today’s marriage celebrations often feature modern Arabic pop music instead of songs that serenaded wedding guests in past generations. Rami Ayash’s *Mabrouk* is now more common at weddings than older hits like Nohad Tarabay’s *Badna Netjawaz al-Eid*, and Tarabay’s song replaced earlier wedding songs rooted in local areas of Lebanon.

As modern songs replace traditional favorites at Lebanese weddings, this unique cultural heritage could be lost.

Before such music is lost forever, scholars at the Higher Institute of Music at Antonine University in Lebanon are working with the financial support of the U.S. government to ensure the preservation of Lebanon’s musical heritage. Thanks to a grant from the U.S. State Department’s Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation, university music researchers are cataloging the remnants of traditional wedding songs from every corner of the country.

The Preservation of Traditional Lebanese Wedding Songs project is in the hands of scholars of the Mediterranean and Arab Traditional Music Center at the university. A research facility at the Department of Musicology and Ethnomusicology within the Higher Institute of Music, the music center is dedicated to the development and practice of ancient and traditional music in the Middle East. Music center experts in the past have published

valuable musicological and ethno-musical studies with the Paris-Sorbonne IV University.

The current project aims to categorize traditional Lebanese weddings songs based on melodic types, catalog music data to replicate traditional wedding models, establish a poetic corpus of wedding songs and publish the results. During the 18-month project, university researchers are gathering data from elders in 40 villages throughout Lebanon.

Researchers are in a race against time, with the advanced age of those who recall the musical traditions lending a sense of urgency to the project.

During preliminary field work, researchers identified villages that best represented melodic roots and repertoires of traditional musical styles. They fanned out across the country over four months and located prime samples of traditional wedding music in nine villages in the north, 24 in Mount Lebanon, and seven in the south.

Jerriyes Massoud from the northern village of Tannourine has been an invaluable source of information. The 109-year-old Massoud has given Antonine University researchers valuable insight into the past with his knowledge of vanishing wedding melodies. With him in Tannourine are other village elders like 85-year-old Umm Nabil and 78-year-old Daad El-Gemayel, who helped researchers with information from a female perspective.

Now that the recording of interviews with village elders in places like Akkar in the north and Marjayoun in the south is complete, university ethnomusicologists will hold informal family sessions in villages to gather audio recordings.

Using the field recordings, researchers will catalog the information, edit the recordings and transcribe the songs that highlight poetic traditions found in the villages. From this information, transcripts will be made in proper Arabic and will also be translated into English and French. In addition to the texts, the music will be transcribed and categorized for further study.

At the project's conclusion, the gathered data will be used in publications that highlight the historical importance of Lebanon's vanishing — but soon to be preserved — traditional wedding music.

### **Memorial Day Holiday Honors American War Dead**

*Holiday started in 1866 to commemorate those killed in the Civil War*

By Michael Jay Friedman, Staff Writer

Washington — The Memorial Day holiday celebrated by Americans on the last Monday of May represents for

many the unofficial beginning of summer. Many will travel over the long holiday weekend to seek out friends and family, beaches and amusement parks. But most will pause at some point to recall the holiday's true purpose: honoring those who died defending their nation.

Memorial Day entertainments throughout the United States range from large sporting events to quintessentially small-town celebrations. The Indianapolis ("Indy") 500 motor race, by some measures the world's largest single-day sporting event, attracts an estimated global audience of more than 320 million.

Meanwhile, in Waterloo, New York — the place where Memorial Day began (at least according to Waterloo) — festivities include a parade, arts and crafts show, a strawberry festival, music, tours of the town's Civil War museum and an antique car show. Civil War buffs in period uniforms and dresses hold a two-night encampment and stand by for live cannon-fire demonstrations. Those not too full from the pizza-eating contest can compete in a five-kilometer race.

The story of Waterloo, and that of the holiday itself, is woven deeply into the nation's history.

During the American Civil War of 1861-1865, which claimed the lives of more than 550,000 people, many citizens began to place flowers on the graves of the war dead. A number of northern municipalities continued these "Decoration Days" after the war ended, but the decisive event occurred in 1866 in Waterloo, 450 kilometers from New York City.

### **THE FIRST ANNUAL OBSERVANCE**

In 1865, Waterloo resident Henry C. Welles, the town's druggist, hit on the idea of formally setting aside a day to honor those killed in the war. He was supported by one of his customers, John B. Murray, who had risen to the rank of brigadier general in the Union (northern) Army, and Murray's friend, Major General John A. Logan, another retired Union commander. In 1866 Waterloo held the first formal, village-wide, annual observance of a day dedicated to honoring the war dead, and it has continued to do so for 144 years. On Memorial Day weekend, visitors inflate the town's population to several times its normal size (5,118 according to its website).

Logan, founder of the Grand Army of the Republic, an organization of Union veterans, in 1868 designated May 30 as a day "for strewing with flowers, or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village, and hamlet churchyard in the land."



Among the ceremonies held that day was one at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia, across the Potomac River from Washington. President Ulysses S. Grant presided. After the speeches and tributes, thousands of war orphans, veterans and others decorated the graves of the Civil War dead. There were more than 20,000 such graves at Arlington Cemetery alone.

By the turn of the century, nearly every state had declared Decoration Day an official holiday. After World War I, Decoration Day was expanded to honor those killed in all of the nation's wars, and after World War II it became known as Memorial Day. (Veterans Day, which honors all veterans, living and dead, is celebrated each year on November 11.)

Several Northern and Southern cities claim to be the originators of Memorial Day, but in 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson proclaimed Waterloo as its official birthplace.

Congress established Memorial Day as a federal holiday in 1971 and fixed its observance on the last Monday in May.

#### HONORING OUR WAR DEAD

The original Waterloo commemoration centered on the decoration of soldiers' graves, the lowering of flags to half-staff, and veterans' parades. These ceremonies continue in cities and towns across the nation on Memorial Day.

There are more than 2.9 million gravesites at 130 national cemeteries around the country. For Memorial Day, volunteers will decorate most of these veterans' graves with small American flags. The U.S. president or vice president typically presides at Arlington National Cemetery and places a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns. Solemn observances are held at Civil War battle sites, including Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and Sharpsburg (Antietam), Maryland.

At 3 p.m., a National Moment of Remembrance unites Americans in prayer and thought as they contemplate the sacrifices made in their behalf.

Thus, even as Americans enjoy their long weekend and the prospect of summer, they also can be found in more somber moods. Wreaths will be laid, thanks given and heads bowed in recognition of those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

#### Indian-American Writer Stirs Up Recipes Full of Tradition, Change

*Monica Bhide celebrates new Indian cuisine in cookbooks and online columns*

By Howard Cincotta  
Staff Writer

Washington — As a cookbook author, cooking teacher and food writer, Monica Bhide is often assumed to be chiefly preoccupied with food. If you assumed that, you would be wrong.

"I'm writing about the relationship between food and family and culture," she says. "It's all about relationships and how food brings people together."

Bhide, an Indian American now living in the Washington area, uses recipes with plenty of the ingredients commonly associated with South Asian cuisine — from chutneys and tandoori chicken to samosas and chapattis — but her culinary advice is equally likely to be spiced with stories about her family and her childhood in New Delhi.

#### MEMORIES AND MENUS

When Bhide writes about her father, for example, she tells of his complicated recipe for the classic Indian dish, butter chicken, which she has found daunting even as an adult.

She tells of making *kheer*, a traditional rice pudding with cardamom, while alone and desperately homesick as a graduate student in a small Virginia town. Its enticing aroma attracted another Indian student, Sameer, who was on his way to the library. They now have been married for more than 17 years and have two sons.

For Bhide, a spice like cardamom can become a means to trace key events in her life. "When I was a child in Delhi," she wrote in *Saveur* magazine, "cardamom was as familiar as the air I breathed." In Bahrain, where she lived for many years as a schoolgirl, Bhide discovered *gahwa*, the fragrant Arabic coffee spiced with cardamom.

After moving to the United States in 1991, she writes, "Cardamom has been both a link to home and a bridge to other cultures." When she describes her older son's changing food tastes in another article, the story becomes a lesson in peer pressures at school and how to cope with them.

#### FOOD WRITING

Bhide's interest in food began in childhood when she learned traditional Indian cooking from both parents, but also became fascinated with the strange foods, such as peanut butter and chocolate brownies, that she saw on

American television programs. At age 10, she stunned her parents by secretly preparing an entire meal to celebrate their anniversary (although the neighbors did help out).

Food and cooking didn't seem to be in Bhide's future, however, and after high school, she earned an engineering degree from Bangalore University and two master's degrees from U.S. schools. Years later, she found herself shaken by the sudden death of a close friend and, with her husband's encouragement, quit her demanding professional job to find a new career path. It was her husband again who prodded Bhide by pointing out that, along with cooking, she loved nothing more than writing. Why not combine the two? So she did.

Bhide, now an American citizen, is the author of three cookbooks, including *The Spice Is Right: Easy Indian Cooking for Today* (2001) and *The Everything Indian Cookbook: 300 Tantalizing Recipes* (2004). Her most recent book is *Modern Spice: Inspired Indian Flavors for the Contemporary Kitchen* (2009), which has just been released in India as well.

"Meals laced with stories, inspirations and grandma's tales along with trendy combinations," said the *Mumbai Mirror* in its review of *Modern Spice*.

In 2004, Bhide won the prestigious Susan B. Langhorne Scholarship for Food Writers. Along with frequent articles for national magazines, she publishes a weekly online column in the *Washington Post* called iSpice.

#### TRADITION AND CHANGE

Bhide is one of a new generation of cooks and food writers who are changing the image of Indian cooking while still remaining true to its fundamental traditions and tastes. "I love tradition, but embody change," Bhide declares. And in *Modern Spice* she writes, "While traditional Indian cooking was perceived to be difficult and fussy, the foundation of modern Indian cooking is perfection and simplicity."

The results are recipes that combine Indian staples and spices in exciting new combinations. *New York Times* food writer Mark Bittman cites potato-peanut *tikkis* and shrimp in green mango butter as among his favorites. The India-based food blog *Saffron Trail* points to such unexpected spice combinations as mango-almond chutney and a fennel-chile dry rub.

"The joke among my friends is that I would spice my spices if I could," Bhide wrote in one of her iSpice columns

Innovating with traditional foods and spices in any culture raises the tricky question of what is authentic and

what is not. Bhide is impatient with such debates. "Authenticity and tradition are born out of personal experience of the home cook and the embrace of the environment," she says, adding that way her mother makes lentils is quite different from the way her mother-in-law makes them. Both are equally "authentic."

#### INDIAN-AMERICAN CUISINE

Bhide is eager to combat the stereotype of Indian cuisine in the United States as largely based on curry dishes, and her columns and cookbooks are showcases for the remarkable diversity of Indian cooking. They also demonstrate that, far from being mysterious, cooking in the Indian tradition can be "easy, fun and intensely flavorful."

The popularity of Indian cooking has grown rapidly in just the nearly 20 years since Bhide made her lonely pot of rice pudding in Virginia, when she was faced with "few choices of pickles, no chutneys, no packaged rotis or naans." In her early married life, she recalls making *paneer* (cheese) from scratch and grinding her own pastes and masalas.

"Today, the level of knowledge and experience about Indian foods and spices has gone way up," Bhide says. She frequently gives tours of an Indian food store in suburban Virginia near her home that stocks a wide array of items ranging from flours, chapattis, and *paneer* to chutneys, Indian-style yogurts – and many, many fresh and packaged spices.

Recently, Bhide has given talks on the history of India through food, and she has stretched her writing to finish a collection of short stories now making the publishing rounds in New York. Her philosophy is simple, she says: "Focus on your passion and what you love and you will be happy in your life."

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